

BARBARA A. MIKULSKI
MARYLAND

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS

HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2003

July 8, 2009

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20460-0001

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I am forwarding a letter from one of my constituents, Mr. [redacted], who is concerned about the impact on his neighborhood by the recent fire at Chestnut Lodge. As outlined in his correspondence, Mr. Sellman reports that paint chips have been found in his yard as a result of the fire and that they may be positive for lead.

I am requesting that you have the appropriate staff review this matter appropriate and send your response to Bart Kennedy in my Baltimore office, at the above address.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator

BAM:wbk
Enclosure(s)

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO
OFFICE INDICATED:

- ☒ 1629 THAMES STREET, SUITE 400
BALTIMORE, MD 21231
(410) 862-4510
VOICE/TDD: (410) 862-4612
- ☐ 60 WEST STREET, SUITE 202
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401-2448
(410) 263-1805
BALTIMORE: (410) 268-1650
- ☐ 6404 IVY LANE, SUITE 406
GREENBELT, MD 20770-1407
(301) 346-8517
- ☐ 32 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
ROOM 203
HAGERSTOWN, MD 27140-4804
(301) 797-2828
- ☐ THE PLAZA GALLERY BUILDING
212 MAIN STREET, SUITE 200
SALISBURY, MD 21801-2403
(410) 548-7711

JUN. 15. 2009 12:12PM

NIMA

NO. 275

P. 1

(w)

(c)

DATE: Monday, June 15, 2009
TO: Senator Barbara Mikulski

SUBJECT: Unassessed Environmental Assessment of Chestnut Lodge
Fire on 7 June 2009-06-15

Senator,

I'm asking for your assistance in getting the appropriate authorities to evaluate the impacts of a major fire that destroyed the Chestnut Lodge building in Rockville, MD on Sunday 7 June. It is my personal opinion that the fire released large amounts of lead-based paint throughout the neighborhood, which present a significant health-risk to the residents, especially young children who are especially sensitive to lead poisoning.

I know of one paint sample that was tested, and it was positive. But I was told not to be concerned by the local Environmental Manager. I have literally thousands of paint chips for the fire in my yard, most of which almost certainly contain significant amounts of lead.

I have been unofficially told that the EPA, State and Montgomery County officials, who you would normally expect to be involved in assessing the situation, have all either not done anything to assist since the fire, or have all indicated that these tasks are outside their areas of responsibilities. That is a typical bureaucratic response, which puts the public at greater risk that it should have to be.

Below is a bit more on the fire and more or less what I have been telling any authorities who I could contact. But all my efforts have been in vain to date.

Please help me, and help my neighbors,

With Respect,

JUN. 15. 2009 12:12PM

NIMA

NO. 275

P. 2

Background Subject: Unassessed Possible Contamination of the Environment in the City of Rockville West End Neighborhood from 7 June fire at Chestnut Lodge

On 7 June, a major fire consumed the old Chestnut Lodge Building in the City of Rockville. Upon awakening on the morning of that same day, some neighbors had significant debris in their properties near the fire. This was a large building, first constructed in the 1880's, so there is likely amounts of lead-based paint in the structure.

Most of the debris on my property consisted of tens of thousands of small to medium-size flakes of white or beige or green-tinged paint chips. The amount on my and my immediate neighbors property of 'ash' or burned wood was minor compared to the the amount of paint.

No coordinated action has been taken that I'm aware of to assess any professional environmental damage or the specific evaluation to the area nor to take in account the potential health concerns for the residents, other than a test on a single sample done by the city. That sample included a positive test for lead in the sample, however, I was called and told not to worry. I'm unimpressed by that response. We have small children in the area, who are especially susceptible to lead poisoning, so I think understanding the full risk is very important. This fire was a rare event, given the age and size of the structure. And all the old encapsulated paint was released into the neighborhood due to the fire.

At this point, most of the information I've seen has been conjecture and opinion. No ones really knows if there is a health risk, because no one has done a professional assessment. And a week has gone by with little seen progress towards to really understanding what may have happened due to the fire.

I'm requesting that Montgomery County work with the City, and other organizations and the neighborhood to properly assess any damage to the environment (quantity and quality testing) and help all affected understand the specific health risk associated with this assessment.

I have been collecting numerous paint samples since the fire, and have saved all of this material for any testing that may be necessary.

A Concerned Montgomery County Resident,

home
work

FAX TRANSMISSION

OFFICE OF SENATOR BARBARA MIKULSKI

Brown's Wharf
1629 Thames St., Suite 400
Baltimore, Maryland 21231
410-982-4510
Fax: 410-962-4760

To: EPA Congressional

Date: July 8, 2009

Fax #: 202-501-1519

Pages: 4, including this cover sheet

From: Bart Kennedy

Subject: Chestnut Lodge Fire